



virile crayfish

Orconectes virilis

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Arthropoda
Class:	Malacostraca
Order:	Decapoda

Features

The virile crayfish has large, green claws with orange tips and numerous bumps. The back is light brown to dark green-brown. It may grow to 4 3/4 inches long. It is our largest native crayfish.

Natural History

The virile crayfish lives in rocky creeks and rivers and lake margins. It eats both dead and living plants and animals. Burrows of this crayfish may be found along a streambank, but it more frequently hides and overwinters under rocks. It usually reaches maturity in its third year. About 450 eggs are laid in March through July.

Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River; interior rivers and streams; natural lakes and prairie marshes; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.